

Flora of the Australian Capital Territory. By NANCY T. BURBIDGE and MAX GRAY. 447 pp. Australian National University Press, Canberra. 1970. \$12 (Australian) [Available in US from International Scholarly Book Services, Box 4347, Portland, Oregon 97208. \$14.30]

The Australian Capital Territory, an area of some 940 square miles which includes the capital city of Canberra, forms part of the eastern Australian tablelands and is an enclave in southeastern New South Wales. Its latitude is closely comparable with that of the highest peaks of the Sierra Nevada but Australia's mountains scarcely attain half the altitude of the Californian summits. It therefore may come as a surprise to find well-developed alpine herbfields on several mountain areas in Australia, in particular above a tree-line at c. 1850m at Mt. Kosciusko. The highest ranges in the Capital Territory (to 1920m) are only some 50 miles north of the Kosciusko plateau and just reach tree-line conditions. The predominant vegetation is *Eucalyptus* forest and woodland, with subalpine heaths and bogs included at the upper altitudes, and with grasslands in the lower and drier parts.

The location, altitude, and prevailing soils exclude many of the vegetation types which most commonly come to mind as distinctively Australian. The semi-desert shrub-lands of the arid interior, the species-rich heaths which characterize sands of the southwest and the east coast of the continent, and the rainforests of the north-east must all be sought elsewhere.

Among the 1324 species included in this Flora (of which 289 are naturalized) grasses form the largest component with 67 genera. Excellent line drawings by Dr. Burbidge illustrate about one third of the species and represent most genera. The keys appear very satisfactory and the descriptions are quite detailed. The authors have investigated many critical groups rather than merely presenting a compilation of existing information. Of particular value are the brief ecological characterizations of each species, the comments on unresolved taxonomic problems, and the inclusion in the keys of species as yet unnamed. A valuable bibliography gives reference to relevant modern works; a glossary, vegetation map and brief notes on the region are also included.

This excellent and attractively presented Flora will be useful throughout the southeastern Australian tableland areas. I recommend it highly for any library which aims at including major works on the Australian flora.—BARBARA G. BRIGGS, National Herbarium of New South Wales, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, Australia.

Cacti of the Southwest --Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. By DEL WENIGER. xvi + 249 pp., 64 color plates. University of Texas Press, Austin. n. d. (9 July 1970). \$25.00.

One cannot help but be impressed with Mr. Weniger's detailed accounts of his collections and observations of cacti presented in this book. He manifests a keen understanding of the combinations of characteristics that separate natural groups, and his descriptions and comments on these taxonomic factors along with discussion of ecological parameters comprise what could have been a real contribution to the study of cacti. It is therefore almost tragic that such a potentially great book instead should be an enigma. Beginning with the title and continuing throughout the book there occur many peculiarities and questions. Why call a book *Cacti of the Southwest* when it deals with the South Central States? Why is there no date on the title page? Why are there proposed 2 new specific epithets, 15 recombinations at the species level and 21 recombinations at the variety level only to have them become invalid, *nomina nuda* because of the lack of proper Latin descriptions and references to basionyms? Why are there no literature citations? Why are there no scientific data or references presented to support statements such as "results of our own chromatographic studies seem important here" in aligning genera? For whom is this book intended? One supposes that it would be particularly appealing